

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
PRACTICE DOCUMENTATION GUIDE  
FIREBREAK**

**394**

**394 – STEP 1. INITIAL EVALUATIONS**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to determine the landowner's desire and need to design and create firebreaks for management or protection from wildfire purposes in New Mexico. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard 394).

The landowner must be interviewed to determine the purpose and need for firebreaks within the forestlands. Some considerations will include the landowners intended placement of the firebreaks in positions where they will prevent the spread of wildfire or to control prescribed burns.

**394 – STEP 2. INVESTIGATIONS, SURVEYS, AND INVENTORIES**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to identify all of the mandatory preliminary operations that are required before the firebreaks can be sited and planned. This will include identifying all needed utility clearances, archeological clearances, and identifying the proper USGS 7.5 minute quadrangle sheet and other needed maps.

**394 – STEP 3. PRACTICE DESIGN**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to plan the firebreaks, identify the objectives, and develop a record of the completed actions taken.

All required deliverables for the design, installation, and compliance are found on the New Mexico Statement of Work. This document will be followed to successfully complete the project.

The local conditions will need to be assessed at the proposed site in order to identify any possible problems that may arise.

This involves assessing the local forest and topographic conditions and the local land uses, among other things. Erosion control must be implemented. Slash should be managed to control pest or fire danger. Selection of plant species used may enhance the value to wildlife. All appropriate maps and reports must be reviewed with the landowner. An awareness of the types of equipment and materials used in the construction of firebreaks is essential, and a list of accepted materials must be provided to the landowner. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard 394, Practice Specification 394, and pertinent job sheets).

The landowner will need to provide the contractor with the appropriate standards, statement of work, job sheets and personal expectations.

**394 – STEP 4. PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to document and describe the methods and materials used during the construction of the firebreaks.

This will include the documentation of the equipment and tools used, techniques and methods used at each site, and recording the relevant information from each site on the approved specification sheets, statement of work, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

**394 - STEP 5. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to assure the proper management and maintenance is completed at the job site.

(See Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practice Standard 394, Practice Specification 394, and appropriate job sheets.

This requires a familiarity with the design and management objectives in order to minimize erosion potential and to maintain the site in a proper and safe fashion while meeting the objectives of the project. These measures should be discussed with the landowner.

**394 – STEP 6. COMPLIANCE OR SPOT CHECKING**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this step is to determine that all work has been completed to the standards required by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

All completed NRCS forms should be collected from the landowner and submitted to the appropriate persons. (See Natural Resources Conservation Service Practice Standard 394, Practice Specification 394, Statement of Work (Firebreak) and associated job sheets).

**II. DOCUMENTS**

Copies of all completed job sheets and associated work sheets should be submitted to the Natural Resources Conservation Service representative within 10 working days of completion of the project. .